

## **Twisting of mummified remains around the umbilical cord as a potential risk of delayed twin reduction in the mare.**

**J Govaere<sup>1</sup>, M Hoogewijs<sup>1</sup>, C De Schauwer<sup>1</sup>, K Smits<sup>1</sup>, H Vandaele<sup>2</sup>, G Van Loon<sup>1</sup>, A de Kruif<sup>1</sup>**

<sup>1</sup> *Faculty of Veterinary Medicine, Ghent University,* <sup>2</sup> *Keros n.v.*

In cases of delayed diagnosis of twin pregnancy in the mare, a transabdominal ultrasound-guided twin reduction (TaUGA) is sometimes performed. Nonetheless, the placenta of the remaining fetus will be unable to expand into the uterus containing the resorbing fetus. This will result in an underdeveloped placenta with a significant avillous zone, and will lead to the birth of a cachectic foal (1). Another risk of a TaUGA might be strangulation of the umbilical cord by the remains of the mummified twin fetus as described in the present case.

An 18-year-old Selle Français mare was found to be pregnant with twins at 120 days of pregnancy. A TaUGA was performed. After a gestation period of 335 days, the mare foaled a healthy colt (53kg) with a total placental weight of 5.2 kg. The placenta exhibited an avillous zone where it had previously been in contact with the placenta of its co-twin. The mummified remains of this co-twin were found inside the allantochorion of the living foal, attached by a long cord (68cm) to its original uterine location. The cord stalk was rotated around the umbilical cord of the living foal, although no strangulation was visible.

Umbilical cord strangulation is considered to be responsible for more than 4.5% of abortions (2). It has been described around the foal's extremities, around embryonic remnants of the vitelline sac and around stalked hippomanes.

(1) Govaere (2008) *Vet Rec* 2008 163: 747-748

(2) Hong (1993) *J Vet Diagn Invest* 5: 560-566